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YUGOSLAVIA: Tensions in Kosovo Province

Ethnic tensions are mounting in the southern Yugoslav Province of Kosovo—an autonomous province of the Serbian republic—on the fifth anniversary of disorders there by Albanian nationalists. After a delay of several months, Kosovo's mainly Albanian authorities have arrested two local Serb organizers of a petition protesting ethnic Albanian rule of the province. According to Yugoslav press accounts, the petition has been signed by tens of thousands of Kosovo Serbs and has the support of prominent intellectuals in Serbia. By Friday, according to Belgrade media, about 5,000 Kosovo Serbs had gathered in the town where the petition drive started to demonstrate against the arrests. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The arrests reflect the Kosovo authorities' growing concern over Serb protests as well as their increasing defiance of Serbia's efforts to regain control of the province. Serbian leaders may now be forced into a new confrontation with Kosovo by the nationalistic Serbian public. Kosovo Serbs are likely to continue their demonstrations, risking clashes with security forces. Federal authorities probably will be unable to ease the strains in the immediate future. [REDACTED]

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